

MAKING TRACKS



BIG BUTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



FALL 1995 ISSUE

REMARKABLE WOMEN IN BUTTE FALLS HISTORY

MARGARET HOWELL: A STORY OF COURAGE

Harry Ward Beecher once wrote, "A mother's heart is a child's classroom." For Butte Falls resident, Wendy Earl, these words still ring true. Wendy, herself, shares many of the fine traits and qualities which she attributes to her mother, Margaret Howell.

"When I think of Mom, I am amazed at her depth of character," Wendy wrote in a letter to BBHS.

Margaret Howell touched the lives of many, including my own. Although I did not have the opportunity to get to know Margaret on an intimate level, I learned much about this woman, I knew and admired, after her death a year ago this October.

Margaret was a unique, yet complex person. On one hand she was a very private person. She did not seek recognition or praise for her widespread generosity to the community-at-large. She supported anything and everything that was good for the children and the community. Her genuine love of the community showed itself in many ways. For example, one day I received a nice card from Margaret which simply read, "Keep up the good work!" Enclosed was a generous donation to the Big Butte Historical Society.

Another time, Margaret read about a young man from Butte Falls High School who was trying to raise money for a trip to Russia. The family did not even know who Margaret Howell was, yet Margaret sent a generous contribution to help send him on his way.

Her "gifts" helped buy books, art prints, and cultural experiences for many students through the years in the Butte Falls School District.

Margaret had a true pioneer spirit. At age 54, she started a nursery business. In the process, she learned about plants, equipment, ordering, marketing and the many other facets of business start-up. She had a vision and the ability to create her dream come true.

"Mom was intensely interested in history, traveling, autobiographies of great people — she enjoyed learning and she enjoyed people," adds Wendy Earl, her daughter. Margaret was raised in Boise, Idaho in a well-to-do family. She chose to raise her family in a small mountain town. Margaret "bloomed wherever she was planted." That was her gift and legacy to the community and people she cared so deeply about.

On October 29, 1994, a teacher at Butte Falls High School, Mike Foley, wrote the following in an eulogy to Margaret's family and friends: "I finally met Margaret Howell at last year's high school graduation ceremony. I was struck by her years and her fragility, such contrast to the powerful hand she extended to me — to all of us. I was humbled by her greatness of spirit, by her greatness of vision."

The focus of her life was people, especially her children and grandchildren. She extended her love to include her community, and various social, educational, and religious organizations.

Her acts of kindness and generosity were her children's classroom. Her children, family and friends loved her — and she loved all of you. And I pray that her heart will be with you always.

Note from the Chairman: It has been said that stories of past courage can define that ingredient. They can teach. They can offer hope. They can provide inspiration. It is my hope that Margaret's story has done all of these. JH



JACKSON COUNTY HISTORICAL FUND

The Situation

The future of the Jackson County Historical Fund (JCHF) seems to be more uncertain than at any time in its forty-six year history.

For several years, Jackson County has experienced a drastic decline in public support for a wide variety of "essential" public services. In 1996 Jackson County voters will consider a proposed new county tax base to replace that lost funding. Inevitably the JCHF will be drawn into the public debate on the pros and cons of substantially increasing county property taxes. Already a growing number of people — in public hearings, newspaper letters-to-the-editor, and on news/talk radio — have questioned the necessity, the value, and even the desirability of continued public tax funding (i.e., the JCHF) for history when property taxes are needed for more "essential" services.

All of the Historical Fund-eligible organizations should begin a dialogue to discuss the Jackson County Historical Fund's future as a public funding source, and how that future might effect all of us individually and collectively.

IN APPRECIATION

A special thanks to all of you who helped make the 4th Annual Poetry Day and 2nd Annual Forest Jubilee a great success. BBHS and the N.W. Forestfolks Arts, Inc. would like to thank the following businesses for their support: BF General Store, BF Tavern and Motel, The Totem Pole, Don Hamann Logging, Ron Hailicka Equipment, Inc., Leon Todd Trucking, Rick's Custom Cabinets, Hessel Equipment, and Pape.

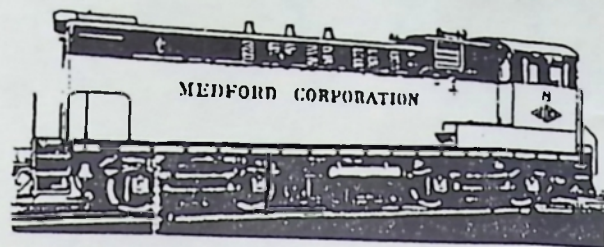
We would also like to thank Cycle Oregon and the Arts Council of Southern Oregon for their financial support. And finally, a special thanks to all the community volunteers for your caring and contribution of time to the Town of Butte Falls. It's people like you that make this world a better place.

BBHS Board Members.

BBHS MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Historical Society meetings are held the last Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the library. We encourage you to attend, to express your opinions regarding the function, projects and fundraisers of the organization.

Support provided in part by the Jackson County Historical Fund



BUTTE FALLS TRAIN UPDATE

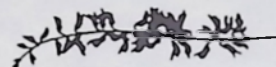
Medco Engine #8 is homeward bound. After spending many years at work for Magna Mines in Arizona, the Baldwin diesel known as #8 is in Albany, Oregon being restored to its former youthful self. Baldwin #8 will be coming out of retirement and completely restored this spring. Medite has given the Southern Oregon Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society permission to use its former Medco name and logo.

We would like to encourage you to attend the Chapter meetings. They meet at 7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month at the Medford Railroad Park. For information, contact Chapter Vice President, Jerry Hellinga, at 772-6432. Even if you cannot attend the meetings, just call and say thanks for the great job this organization has done in getting the train project moving for Butte Falls.

A SPECIAL THANKS



A special thanks to tree trimmer, George Walker, for the great job on grooming the trees and shrubs around the new museum. When we asked George how much we owed him, he simply smiled his toothless smile and said, "This one's for the Lord". Thanks, George!



"Making Tracks" will be published quarterly, instead of bi-monthly. All members of BBHS should receive a copy. If you do not receive a copy and would like to, please let us know. Annual membership fee is still only \$5.00 per family.

We still have a few director positions to fill on the BBHS Board. We have some neat projects coming on board — such as the new museum and the historic excursion train. If you have time to attend one meeting a month on the last Tuesday in the library at 7:00 p.m., please give Cory Hamann a call. We'd love to have you join.

BOARD MEMBERS

Cory Hamann
Bev Carrillo

Joyce Hailicka

Dan Murphy
Gloria Karches

BIG BUTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICE AND CABOOSE HOURS
FRIDAY 1-4 P.M., SATURDAY 10 - 4 P.M. AND SUNDAY 1-4 P.M.
HOSTESS: KAETE THOMPSON 865-3333



"Success has a simple formula: do your best, and people may like it."
— SAM EWING

THE PAST BECOMES THE PRESENT: An Enduring Legacy

Since the early days of our history, railroads have been an intricate part of our lives. Many of the early residents of Butte Falls arrived by train. According to Imogene Abbott, longtime resident of Butte Falls, a train would arrive with a new family, their belongings, and their livestock. They would unload their possessions and make Butte Falls their lifetime home.

Other people would ride the train from Medford to Butte Falls in search of beautiful scenery, amusement, or just a relaxing getaway from their everyday lives in the valley.

As early as 1910, a standard gauge railroad was completed from Medford to the Town of Butte Falls. The lush timber stands of pine and fir created a livelihood for the early inhabitants.

With an eye on the future, the town began its roots. The railroad and lumber mill provided the backbone for what would become the Town of Butte Falls we know today. By 1910, there was a grade school, stores, a hotel, and bank. The following year the town was incorporated.

As railroads began to spring up in different towns throughout the state and country, areas which were once inaccessible were now becoming the towns and tourist spots which are popular today. Railroads played a major role in establishing the network of rural communities.

Where would Butte Falls have been without the railroad?

HISTORY HAPPENINGS IN BUTTE FALLS

Nation's First Woman Fire Chief Reigns from Butte Falls



(picture from Ed & Donna Arnold)

The Capello family gave Butte Falls three of its five fire chiefs. But it was Fire Chief Ruth Capello who was one of the first women in America to become a fire chief in 1973. Ruth served for nineteen years as a volunteer for the Butte Falls Fire Department. She headed the Department for nine years.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Dear Friends of the BBHS,

Autumn is in the air . . . the forest we live in has become a treasure chest of gold and scarlets. October is one of my favorite times because it promises a new beginning. Each year at this time I begin to think how much I will miss summer. Then suddenly, as the leaves begin to change and the days get cooler, I begin to feel the energy and ecstasy of autumn.

Fall gives us a chance to look at everything around us with a new and different point of view. History tells us that if we wait long enough, things start looking better. Or maybe our perspective just changes, like the seasons.

Imagine yourself twenty years from now . . . things that were once heartbreakers now seem silly or funny. Problems you thought were insurmountable worked out okay. And grief added depth and quality to your life.

Like the autumn leaves, fall is a time to let go and move forward. Cherish each day, for one day, we will all be history. Each day, take a small step towards helping to make this a better community for us all.

1. Stay in contact with your heart.
2. Remind yourself of what is truly important.
3. Keep the magic in your life.



There is always the temptation to live in the past or in the future. Carpe Diem!

Joyce Hailicka
Chairperson
BBHS

NOW AND THEN:

Something Old/Something New

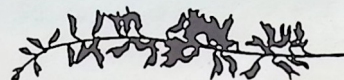
1929: A new commercial airport is being planned in Medford.

Plans are also underway for a new county courthouse to be built entirely from federal timber revenue generated from timber sales in the surrounding rural areas.

1995: A new international airport is on the drawing board in Medford.

In part, because of cuts in federal timber revenue to the county, the three full-time county commissioners may be replaced by seven part-time representatives.

A thought for the day: Butte Falls isn't the only severely-affected timber community, so is Medford, Oregon.



To become a member of the Big Butte Historical Society, simply send a check for \$5.00 annual membership fee, to P.O. Box 379, Butte Falls, OR 97522. You will be on our mailing list and will receive a quarterly newsletter, such as this. You may want to send a gift membership to a friend or relative. Please include your name and the name and address of the person you are sending it to.

"Obstacles are things a person sees
when he takes his eyes off his goal."
— E. JOSEPH COSSMAN



MEMBERSHIP FORM - \$5.00 per household

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Send to:

BIG BUTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 379
Butte Falls, OR 97522

